

HOT TOPIC (11/16/16)

NEXT WEEK: DRAFT UIC PERMITS ISSUED FOR DEWEY BURDOCK ISR SITE

As early as Monday, November 21, 2016, we anticipate issuing draft UIC permits and an aquifer exemption decision to Powertech USA, Inc. for a proposed uranium in-situ recovery (ISR) project northwest of Edgemont, South Dakota. These UIC permits will be the first EPA has directly issued for uranium recovery nationwide, and include some requirements that will be new to the uranium ISR industry to ensure adequate protection of underground sources of drinking water (USDWs). The proposed project site is near the Black Hills, where at least 38 tribal nations have historic claims or consider this area to be sacred. Through consultation over the past several months, several tribes have raised concerns about potential impacts on historic properties of cultural importance. Following issuance of the draft permits, we will provide interested tribes and other stakeholders specific information about how the UIC permits propose to protect USDWs at the site. There will be a 75-day public comment period (vs. the 30-day regulatory requirement), and four public outreach events (including hearings) in January near the site to allow ample opportunity for tribes and other stakeholders to provide comments. We will continue to encourage interested tribes to consult with us through the permitting process. Because of the tribal concerns raised and the proximity of this project to the Dakota Access Pipeline where some of the same Tribes are engaged (e.g., Standing Rock Sioux), we expect to receive many adverse comments and that a final decision to issue UIC permits would be appealed. Region 8's Office of Water Protection/UIC and Public Affairs programs are coordinating closely with OW, OGWDW, OITA, OAR, OPA and OGC. **Contacts: Sarah Bahrman, 312-6243; Douglas Minter, 312-6079; and Valois Shea, 312-6276.**